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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/663,554

09/16/2003

Bret M. Berry

31132.172

2585

46333 7590 01/17/2007
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EXAMINER

SWIGER III, JAMES L

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3733

SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
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3 MONTHS

01/17/2007

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

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Office Action Summary	Application No.		Applicant(s)	
	10/663,554		BERRY, BRET M.	
	Examiner		Art Unit	
	James L. Swiger		3733	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 26 October 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-8, 11-21, 23, 24, 27 and 28 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 14-21 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-8, 11-21, 23-24, and 27-28 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 9/16/2003 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 10/26/2006 has been entered.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-8, 11-12, 23-24, and 27-28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Young et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,190,414) in view of Maroney et al. (US Patent 6,277,123).

Young et al. disclose an apparatus for installing a vertebral implant assembly comprising a pair of endplate assemblies (Fig. 9), a tubular body (108), an axle having a proximal and distal end (120), a set of gears (138) capable of connecting to the proximal end of the axle, and an engager device (136) connected to the gears capable of rotating the tubular body to expand the vertebral implant assembly (Col. 5, lines 25-35). The device of Young et al. further comprise an outer casing (118), a handle section (106)

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that extends through the outer casing and partially into the handle (cutout portion, Fig. 7) and that is fixedly connected (110) and rotationally engages the outer casing since it must be able to move the shaft. The device also includes a handle that has a first portion fixed to the outer casing (110), and a second portion to rotate the axle (112) that may also be considered a cap member, a plurality of gears (136 and 156), an engager device (136). Additionally, Young et al. has a portion (138) that has discontinuous threads (140) that are considered to function as teeth. They are considered to be radially spaced with respect to one another and are in the direction of the second gear. Young et al. also disclose a holding instrument (124) capable of attachment to the endplate assemblies and outer casing (see fig. 10).

Young et al. disclose the claimed invention except for a positioning mechanism with selectively pivotable arc portions. Maroney et al. disclose a device having pivoting, arcuate arms (21) that allow for a better grip on the prosthesis when inserting for insertion at the proper depth, or even for accommodating various sizes of prostheses in use of the invention (Col. 1, lines 30-67 to Col. 2 lines 1-3). For better clarification of the interpretation, the device of Young et al. could be rotated and used in a different orientation as modified with the arms of Maroney et al. in the spirit of the invention. It would have been obvious one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to construct the device of Young et al. having at least pivoting, arcuate positioning mechanisms in view of Maroney et al. in order to have a better grip on the prosthesis when inserting it into the vertebral area.

Claim 13 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the

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combination of Young et al. '414 and Maroney et al. '123 as applied to claims 1 and 28, respectively, and further in view of Keller (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0229355).

The combination of Young et al. and Maroney et al. disclose the claimed invention except for a pair of alignment arms and an alignment member to align the vertebral implant as the assembly expands. Keller et al. disclose a device having parallel alignment arms (57, and see profile Fig. 6, left) and an alignment member to facilitate proper alignment as the device expands (52a and 52b). Keller discloses that these items help keep the instrument body in alignment and allow the prosthesis holder/alignment members to move exclusively perpendicular and parallel to each other (par. 0018). It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to construct the device of the combination of Young et al. and Maroney et al. having at least alignment arms and alignment members in view of Keller to keep the instrument body in alignment and more effectively deliver the implant in use of the instrument.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-8, 11-13, 23-24, and 27-28 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to James L. Swiger whose telephone number is 571-272-

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5557. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday, 9:00am to 5:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Eduardo Robert can be reached on 571-272-4719. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

JLS


1/7/07

EDUARDO C. ROBERT
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER